

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8626

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAN JOSE 4424

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, CS

SUBJECT: ALBERTO INOCENTE ALVAREZ

REF: STATE 253428

1. SOME ASPECTS OF ALVAREZ' MOTIVATION ARE INDEED PERPLEXING. HOWEVER, MOST OF THE QUESTIONS IN REFTEL CAN BE ANSWERED TO OUR RELATIVE SATISFACTION--OTHERS LESS SO.

2. THE DEPARTMENT'S IMPRESSION OF THE FIGUERES/ODUBER RELATIONSHIP (SECOND SENTENCE, PARA 1, REFTEL) GENERALLY MATCHES THE EMBASSY'S. HOWEVER, PRESIDENT ODUBER IS CURRENTLY AT THE CENTER OF A GREAT AND INCREASING AMOUNT OF POLITICAL CONTROVERSY OVER NOT ONLY HIS RELUCTANCE TO FORCE A CONFRONTATION WITH DON PEPE BUT PRECISELY OVER SOME INDICATIONS THAT THE PRESIDENT HIMSELF IS CALLING SIGNALS TO PROTECT VESCO. WE CANNOT GIVE DEPARTMENT A FINAL READING ON THIS AT PRESENT, AND INDEED PRESENT FERMENTATION ON FATE OF EXTRADITION LAW MAY BE SIGNIFICANT INDICATOR. IN ANY CASE, ODUBER DID AGREE TO ALVAREZ' TRIP TO U.S. (SEE SAN JOSE 4340, WHICH APPARENTLY CROSSED WITH REFTEL).

2. WE SHOULD REMEMBER THAT ALVAREZ AND FIGUERES ARE OLD AND CLOSE FRIENDS--EACH ANXIOUS TO AVOID INFLICTING
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PERSONAL DAMAGE ON THE OTHER. THUS, ALVAREZ'

INSISTENCE ON LEAVING FIGUERES OUT OF HIS DISCUSSION WITH THE SEC AND FIGUERE DJ LACK OF OBJECTION TO ALVAREZ' EFFORTS TO CLEAR HIS OWN NAME. THIS CLOSE PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP ALSO HELPS EXPLAIN THE DIFFERENCE IN VIEW BETWEEN DON PEPE AND JOSE MARTI. IN ADDITION, JOSE MARTI UNDOUBTEDLY IS CLOSELY AWARE OF MUCH VESCO ACTIVITY IN COSTA RICA THAT DON PEPE HAS NEVER HEARD ABOUT. JOSE MARTI MAY APPRECIATE BETTER THAN DON PEPE THE POSSIBLE ADVERSE IMPLICATIONS FOR HIS BENEFACOR VESCO OF SOME OF ALVAREZ' INFORMATION.

3. THE CHANGES IN ATTITUDE OF TARAFA AND ALVAREZ FROM AUGUST TO NOW MAY BE EXPLAINED ON THE BASIS OF ALVAREZ' UNCERTAINTY OVER THE EXTENT OF THE PRESSURES HE PERCEIVES TO BE UPON HIM. WHETHER THESE DERIVE FROM HIS PRECISE KNOWLEDGE OF LIQUIDATORS' ACTIONS, INTERNATIONAL PUBLICITY, OR U.S. COURTS' CONTINUED ACTIONS IS HARD FOR US TO JUDGE BUT CLEARLY ALL ARE INVOLVED TO SOME EXTENT. IT HAS BECOME ENTIRELY CLEAR THAT TARAFA IS NOT CAPABLE OF REACHING HIS OWN DECISIONS ON THIS ISSUE. ALVAREZ MOVES HIM LIKE A MINOR CHESSMAN. IN OTHER WORDS, THE INTEREST FROM THE ONSET WAS PROBABLY ALVAREZ' INTEREST AND THE VACILLATIONS WERE HIS OWN.

4. EMBASSY'S ASSESSMENT OF INOCENTE ALVAREZ IS THAT HE IS A VERY TROUBLED MAN CAUGHT UP BETWEEN TWO MAJOR FORCES, THE GOCR AND THE USG, BOTH OF WHICH HE ADMIRES AND FEARS AS ONLY A CUBAN EXILE CAN. HE IS ANXIOUS THAT HE NOT BE ON THE WRONG SIDE OF THE U.S. FOR THE IMPLICATIONS HE BELIEVES THAT MIGHT HAVE FOR HIS CHILDREN WHO RESIDE IN THE U.S. AND INTEND TO BECOME U.S. CITIZENS AS WELL AS FOR HIS OWN FINANCIAL INTERESTS. IN SHORT, ALVAREZ DOES NOT RELISH, FOR A VARIETY OF UNDERSTANDABLE REASONS, THE PROSPECT OF BEING AT ODDS WITH THE USG. ALVAREZ' SITUATION IN COSTA RICA IS MORE COMPLICATED. AS A COSTA RICAN CITIZEN WHO HAS BEEN A BUSINESS PARTNER AND FRIEND OF PEPE FIGUERES FOR MORE THAN 15 YEARS, ALVAREZ RECOGNIZES THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS RELATIONSHIP TO HIS ACCESS TO THE CENTER OF POWER. AS
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ALVAREZ INTENDS TO CONTINUE LIVING IN COSTA RICA HE DOES NOT WANT TO HARM HIS GOOD PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS WITH ANYONE IN AUTHORITY. FOR THIS REASON, ALVAREZ HAS BEEN CAUTIOUS IN REACHING A FINAL DECISION TO MEET WITH THE SEC AND TOUCHED ALL THE KEY BASES HERE (FIGUERES--ODUBER--FACIO) BEFORE DOING SO.

5. ALVAREZ' PRINCIPAL REASON FOR WANTING TO MEET IN

SAN JOSE WAS TO AVOID HIS LAWYER'S FEE. THE EMBASSY SUGGESTED THE THIRD COUNTRY IDEA AS A POSSIBLE COMPROMISE, AND HE AGREED. ALVAREZ HAS MENTIONED SEVERAL TIMES HIS FEAR OF VESCO-INITIATED ACTS NOT ONLY AGAINST HIS PERSON BUT AGAINST HIS FAMILY. HE SEEMS TO BE MUCH MORE CONCERNED ABOUT THE IMPLICATIONS FOR VIOLENCE IN COSTA RICA ARISING OUT OF HIS SUIT AGAINST VESCO IN SAN JOSE THAN THOSE POSSIBLY ARISING FROM HIS MEETING WITH THE SEC. IMMUNITY HAS NEVER BEEN DISCUSSED OR EVEN ALLUDED TO EXCEPT FOR EMBASSY COMMENT TO ALVAREZ ABOUT THERE BEING

NO U.S. WARRANT OUT FOR HIS ARREST.

6. ALVAREZ PUT NO LIMIT ON NUMBERS PRESENT AT MEETING AND NEVER SUGGESTED MEETING SHOULD BE HIGHLY SECRET--ONLY THAT HIS LAWYER SHOULD NOT KNOW OF IT.

7. GOING BACK NOW TO THE DEPARTMENT'S KEY CONCERN ABOUT BEING CAUGHT IN THE MIDDLE (LAST LINE, PARAGRAPH 1). DURING RECENT SHORT MEETING WITH EMBOFF (SAN JOSE 4340), IMPRESSION WAS GAINED THAT ALVAREZ PRESENTED THE ISSUE OF THE SEC MEETING TO ODUBER AS IF THE INITIATIVE FOR THE MEETING HAD COME FROM WASHINGTON TO ALVAREZ AND NOT THE OTHER WAY AROUND. PERHAPS ALVAREZ PRESENTED IT THIS WAY TO MAKE IT EASIER TO SELL TO THE PRESIDENT. WHEN ALVAREZ AND TARAFA TALKED TO FIGUERES ABOUT THE SAME IDEA IT IS MOST UNLIKELY THAT ALVAREZ WOULD HAVE GIVEN THIS TWIST TO THE ORIGIN OF THE IDEA. IN ANY CASE, WE BELIEVE THAT ALVAREZ IS MUCH TOO DEEPLY INVOLVED PERSONALLY WITH BOTH FIGUERES AND ODUBER AND HIS OWN FUTURE IN COSTA RICA TO DARE OR WANT TO WORK ONE AGAINST THE OTHER.

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